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Miss Yvonne Hunter
 ALL US WORKS

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 • 872

I am in third grade. I got left down one year because my mother was in New York one spring and I didn't have no shoes. I take arithmetic, language and reading. I like arithmetic best. When I grow up, if I don't be a secretary, I want to be a nurse.

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For lunch at school we have popcorn, links, milk, roll, and have soup sometime. We have to pay for it. Sometime we take sandwich. At home we have grits, sometime rice for breakfast. Put milk and butter on rice. And have bread. Supper we have chicken and rice. Have greens, sometime cornbread and soup—vegetable soup. When Itchy and Joe go in the creek, we have oysters, crab, clams, fish.

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Mother want us in bed at six o'clock. Sometime we go to bed seven-thirty. Six sleep in a room. Tina and me sleep together, and Patricia and her two children sleep together, Mama and Papa sleep together, and Itchy sleep on the chair, and David and Johnny sleep on the couch.

We get up six o'clock. The bus come by at seven. School start at eight-thirty. It takes five minute to get to school in the bus. I wash dishes before I go to school.

All us works. Sometime I wash dishes and I sweep the floor and I mop the floor. I cook. I cook grits, rice, cornbread. I cook meat, fry chicken, and I can make macaroni, and I can make salad.

I don't know if I want to get married. I don't like boys.

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 HN23 Sea Islanders HN23
 South Carolina
 Johns Island

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Suz: Annie?
 Cass: Ma'am?
 Suz: You been to the wedding?
 Cass: Yes, ma'am.
 Suz: Did you get any cake?
 Cass: Yes, ma'am.
 Suz: How nice that taste?
 Cass: Nice, nice.

Annie?
 Ma'am?
 Did you been to the wedding?
 Yes, ma'am.
 Did you get any wine?
 Yes, ma'am.
 How nice that taste?
 Nice, nice.

Annie?
 Ma'am?
 You see my turkey?
 Yes, ma'am.
 Which side he game?
 So, so.
 Will you help me catch him?
 Yes, ma'am.

Get ready, let's go.
 All: Shoo turkey, shoo, shoo,
 Shoo turkey, shoo, shoo,
 Shoo turkey, shoo, shoo,
 Shoo turkey, shoo.



524

Miss Yvonne Hunter
 A LOT OF KIDS PLAY THOSE GAMES

I learn some songs and games from my mother, some from my brother, and then I learn some in school. A lot of kids play those games. Mostly girls. Kids that are seven, eight, nine, ten, eleven, twelve play. There are some that don't like to play the games.

It's no music teacher at school. Our teacher have times for teaching songs. They have piano. When Mama teach us songs, she teach us until we learn it good.

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 Johns Island



Mr. Esau Jenkins

THEY PAINTED IT BLACK

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I haven't gotten any further than the fourth grade in grammar school here. I had to work, and because of that I had to leave school. And then too, the school we had here wasn't encouraging to go to. We had around fifty children and one teacher with a one-door school.

(177)

And beside that, they painted it black, that we could be identified as to who go to the school. It discouraged me when I got some pride. I left school and went to Charleston and started working on a boat. But I still was serious about getting my education. I know I couldn't have done anything out of a fourth-grade education.

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Then I got married some years later and find out that I have a great responsibility, and I know that my education was limited. So I decided that I would work and go to school at the same time. I went four years more, which help me to transact my own business, and now I'm happy to say that

159 have forty to fifty children to one teacher, and have to carry 'em from
871 scratch to seventh grade.

177 So we know that was a terrible condition, and that's the condition that
183 I want to try to eliminate. And that's my reason for not taking this bribe. I
(661) know that we wouldn't have gotten anywhere, not as long as I was willing
to take bribe and go along with the white folks. I had made some enemy
by not taking the bribe. I had made some of my people afraid of me because
I kept on fighting for the Negroes' right. But I didn't stop.

159 The white folks cut off this one big plantation that I used to haul to, as I
494 had three buses and two trucks. Sometimes I make sixty dollars, sixty to
177 eighty dollars a day, with three or four vehicle—twenty dollars for each one
(465) —to carry the people there. They cut that off, but I wouldn't stop. I keep on
driving and keep on fighting.

879 Since we have gotten the high school, now we have had quite a few
873 children graduated from the high school here on the island. Since then we
444 have been able to get this consolidated grammar school, and we have buses.

Mr. Esau Jenkins

WE DIDN'T HAVE A CHANCE
WHEN WE GO INTO COURT

159 I'll tell you another way voting was able to help us. I could remember
177 not too long ago, we didn't have a chance when we go into court. I remem-
692 ber a day I was riding with a man coming to Johns Island from Charleston,
666 and a white person ran into the back of his truck. When we stop to find
out what happen to the person, the law took side with the person who ran
into the back of his truck, and he had to go to court.

We all thought that the judge would say, "Well, somebody ran into
the back of the truck, certainly seem like that person is wrong." Unfortu-
nately, he said that the colored man was wrong. He didn't have a chance in
the court. But we decided to change that thing by getting people to see the
importance of citizenship, registration and voting.

159 We got them to be interested in organizing what we call the Progressive
494 Club. I emphasize the word "progressive" which mean look upward, do
666 something better. And in this club we told them that if you're not registered
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 South Carolina
 Johns Island

871 read and to sign their name. And they would say quietly, "I can't write" or "I
 875 can't read that well," and that's how I found out where each one of those
 (212) students was on that first night.

871 The people we worked with were denied an education and so we had to
 875 teach them how to read and write. I don't remember when they got a full
 • 875 nine months elementary school on Johns Island. They didn't have anything
 185 but a little four-month school when Septima was teaching over there. When
 the people needed them to work in the fields, the farmers just went and
 knocked on the school house and the kids had to come out. So they didn't
 even get a full four-month education.

871 And then they told me the things they wanted to learn, which was to be
 212 able to write letters to their relatives that live elsewhere and read letters from
 185 them, rather than have to carry them to the white people they worked for to
 read them for them. They wanted to know how to do money orders. So then I
 started to teach them what they wanted to learn.

871 And of course they were conscious of the voting process because Esau
 666 had run for school board in 1954. He didn't win because he didn't have
 185 enough blacks registered on the island to put him in. They had three posi-
 tions open and he came in fourth. Well, after that election they started ap-
 pointing the school board members. Therefore, the students knew the impor-
 tance of getting registered to vote. So it wasn't hard to sell them that idea.
 But like I said, I worked with them on the things they wanted to know first.

We had no idea of the school spreading. We were just doing what Esau
 asked us to do for his people on Johns Island. Well, they started registering to
 vote, and then they encouraged other people to go and register to vote. Peo-
 ple on Johns Island were registering to vote so fast that people on Wadmalaw
 wanted it. Then Edisto wanted it. Then we wound up in the north area of
 Charleston with two classes.

Mrs. Bernice Robinson

871 THE PROGRAM WAS TRANSFERRED
 185 TO-THE SOUTHERN CHRISTIAN
 LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

By 1961 so many people were asking for the program from all around the
 South. Myles felt it was getting to the point where we were spreading our-
 selves too thin. The best thing for us to do was to contact organizations and
 have them send people in to Highlander to be trained as teachers. We would
 work with them for one week and train them as teachers. Then they could go
 back and set up classes.

871 And then we talked about second-stage classes—political education. Our
 641 classes didn't just stick to reading and writing to register to vote. We talked
 185 about the power that was in the hands of the people if they know the set-up of
 the government. So we talked about the set-up and who you go to for what.

5: Nichols

L-5

(no date) 1989

NN23 Sea Islanders NN23

South Carolina

Georgetown

35

121 views.) In newly independent states and nations and in a pluralistic society like that of the United States, such action-oriented field work may now be the only feasible kind, as previously dominant groups interact with those now assuming control over their own institutions and directions for the first time. The telling factor, of course, in choosing such an orientation for linguistic field work should be the kinds of insights into the nature and uses of language gained by this approach.

3.2 Functions of the Field Worker Within the Community

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• 872 Because the river island which was the focus of my study was largely inaccessible to outsiders, I initially obtained a job as a volunteer teacher's aide in the elementary school on the mainland which island children attended. For several mornings a week I assisted a white female teacher in the upper grades, who taught more than one hundred pupils, the majority of whom were black, in both science and social studies classes each day. During the course of a morning, I came in contact with one to three island children in each class, and encountered a broad spectrum of language characteristic of rural Georgetown County. As much time as possible (126) was spent initially in listening to the children, recording certain grammatical constructions on paper as they were heard and noting the speaker and the circumstances. Switching from creole features to more standard usage was noted,

5: Nichols

L-5

(no date) 1989

NN23 Sea Islanders NN23

South Carolina

Georgetown

36

123 especially when younger students spoke with the white teacher
• 872 whose native dialect was a midwestern variety of American
English, and differences in playground language and classroom
language were also observed. Significant lack of understand-
ing between teacher and pupil occurred on occasion. Efforts
were made on both sides to remedy this lack of understanding,
with children switching from Gullah syntax to more standard
forms when asked to repeat an utterance and with the teacher
giving additional directions to certain pupils known to have
some difficulty in understanding her expectations. The
teacher made no noticeable alteration in her language pat-
terns, however. Whenever possible, other classrooms were
visited and services appropriate to a teacher's aide were
given when asked for. Conversations with the staff were
helpful in learning of the difficulties which had been faced
by beginning teachers who were unfamiliar with language
patterns in the area, and in learning something of the atti-
tudes toward language held by those staff members who were
native to the county. The range of language used by the
teachers themselves was also easily observed in informal
groups having coffee or engaged in playground duties. At-
tendance at parent-teacher meetings gave limited contact with
some parents in a school setting and with several school
board members and community leaders.

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As I got to know individual children, I made efforts
to extend my contact with them beyond the school framework.

10: Johnson S-4,5 (no date) 1930
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
St. Helena Island

GULLAH: THE DIALECT OF THE NEGROES 61

Williams relates the following incident as an illustration of the unusual persistence of Gullah: "More, perhaps, than a hundred years ago certain Negroes were carried from a rice plantation in Colleton County and put on a cotton plantation in Barnwell District, as it was called then, but to this day (1896) the older ones of that set of Negroes, who grew up before the war, speak as pure Gullah as their grandfathers and grandmothers spoke on Ashepoo. They seem to have been scarcely affected in their low-country Gullah speech by the white people that were numerous and all around them and the Negroes native to that neighborhood, who talked so differently to themselves."¹²³

It is not at all necessary to predicate an ethnic basis for the survival of the low-country Negro speech. Does not the low-country white speech show the same persistence? And when a Charlestonian or Edistonian moves to the up-country, does it not take several generations to obliterate the low-country characteristics of the speech of his family? The instance cited by Williams merely illustrates the fact that speech patterns are like other human culture patterns. Even in a strange environment they tend to persist indefinitely unless the surrounding group uses pressure to alter them or the immigrant group considers it positively advantageous to substitute the new patterns for their old ones. The persistence of Gullah is merely the persistence of a set of speech patterns in a more or less isolated cultural area.

Most of the younger generation of sea-island Negroes have been to school for periods ranging from a few days [872].

¹²³ *De Ole Plantation*, Preface, p. v.

10: Johnson S-4,5 (no date) 1930
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 South Carolina
 St. Helena Island

62

FOLK CULTURE ON ST. HELENA ISLAND

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178
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[875]
to seven or eight years. Is this process not rapidly de-
 Gullahizing the Negro dialect? Probably not. It de-
 pends a great deal upon the teacher, his own speech, his
 training, and the possibility of giving the pupils an ade-
 quate exposure to standard English. Visiting the humble
 schools of the various islands, one is struck with several
 facts. The teacher is nearly always a native, which is as it
 should be. He, or she, more often the latter on St. Hel-
 ena, has little training beyond the school in which he
 teaches, he receives a mere pittance for his work and must
 do other things to support himself, and as a rule he teaches
 about seven grades in a one-room building.

I have heard pupils recite in most of the schools on
 St. Helena Island. Most of them spell like this: *h-e-a-r-t*,
heat; *m-a-n*, *mahn*; *t-h-a-t*, *dat*; *w-i-n-e*, *vine*; *v-i-n-e*,
wine; *o-i-l*, *ile*; and the teacher soon despairs of trying to
 change their habits to any noticeable degree. I once lis-
 tened to a sixteen year old boy trying to read correctly the
 simple sentence, "I will give them to the men." With
 the possible errors *vill*, *gib*, *dem*, *de*, *mans*, *mons*, there
 was not much chance of his ever reading every word cor-
 rectly. His teacher had him repeat it again and again,
 but as fast as she made him say one word properly he
 would go wrong on another one. Finally, after some fif-
 teen trials, she gave up and let him read on in his own
 fashion. With only a few minutes each day devoted to
 reading, and with many teachers teaching in the vernac-
 ular, there is little chance that the schools will make any
 serious inroads in the dialect in the present generation.
 Fifty years, perhaps even a hundred years, from now, the
 English of the sea-island Negroes will still be looked upon
 as something unusual.

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
(1525-ca. 1880)

NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
St. Helena Island

166. A SOCIAL HISTORY OF THE SEA ISLANDS

175
657 cnts and teachers. These two societies, together with the Port Royal Relief Committee, organized in Philadelphia, March 3, paid all salaries for four months, when the Treasury Department, having derived \$200,000 from the sale of confiscated cotton, assumed payment of superintendents' salaries on July 1, still leaving the salaries of the teachers, however, to the benevolent societies. In the meantime other societies for the relief of the freedmen had been organized in the North and West and even in Great Britain.¹⁹

THE SOCIAL EXPERIMENT

On the morning of March 3, 1862, Pierce sailed from New York with the first delegation of superintendents and teachers, forty-one men and twelve women, each approved either by Pierce or Secretary Chase, each with a certificate of appointment from the Department. On the ninth they arrived at Beaufort. A few returned North immediately after their arrival, while still others came to take their places or to increase the number in the field. The largest number duly commissioned and in actual service did not exceed at any time seventy men and sixteen women.²⁰

Many of those who came had little knowledge of the Negro and none whatever of slave conditions, but they were, for the most part, young, enthusiastic, and well educated. Youths just out of Harvard and Yale, divinity students fresh from the seminary, medical students and doctors with years of experience, they came, risking their

• (872) ¹⁹ Friends of the freedmen in England maintained a school on St. Helena Island from 1862 to 1869. See J. W. Alvord, *Letters from the South Relating to Freedmen*.

²⁰ Pierce, "Second Report," *Rebellion Record*, sup. I, p. 315.

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
(1525-ca. 1880)
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
St. Helena Island

THE AFTERMATH

211

ation, and the Benezet Association, all of Pennsylvania, continued to keep teachers in the field until about 1872,²⁸ and Philbrick employed teachers for the people on his plantations until he sold the land. State schools were not started on St. Helena Island until 1874, and then conducted for three months in "small rooms of dwelling houses, or rough cotton houses—out of repair and without glass windows."²⁹ The three trustees for St. Helena, of whom Miss Towne was one, hoped to build a schoolhouse each year until every part of the Island was accommodated. With the aid of the Federal fund, they were able to erect small buildings and keep them in repair.

The public schools, however, were always inadequate, for there were never sufficient funds to equip them properly and no money whatever to provide the pupils with books and slates, and the pupils themselves had no ready money with which to buy them. "The State schools," wrote Miss Towne in 1874, "are now taught by colored teachers of small attainment and experience, mostly from our Penn Schools³⁰ in this district, or by the returned 'old owners,' who also have little experience."³¹

Miss Towne, with the assistance of Miss Murray and sometimes with that of her graduates, enlarged the curriculum of Penn School and gradually extended the school's influence over the Island. The school offered its pupils the orthodox classical education in the elementary

²⁸ The Benezet Association gave some aid to Penn School until about 1879.

²⁹ MS, Letters of Laura M. Towne. Laura M. Towne to F. R. Cope, Nov. 13, 1873.

³⁰ There were several schools in the region around Beaufort during the periods of occupation and reconstruction supported by Pennsylvania benevolent societies.

³¹ MS, Letters of Laura M. Towne. Laura M. Towne to F. R. Cope, April 11, 1874.

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
(1525-ca. 1880)

NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
St. Helena Island

212

A SOCIAL HISTORY OF THE SEA ISLANDS

- 872 grades. The school was equipped with blackboards,
(175) charts, and maps, and in most cases provided the pupils
with books and slates. After Miss Towne's death in 1901,
Miss Murray carried on the work of the school until 1904
when Miss Rossa B. Cooley and Miss Grace B. House,
teachers at Hampton Institute in Virginia, took over the
work, and the curriculum was enlarged to include indus-
trial and agricultural training similar to that offered by
Hampton.

527 As in slavery the laborer had stopped work at noon
(461) Saturday and declared a holiday until Monday morning,
(567) so did the freedman. Saturday afternoon saw the island
roads lined with pedestrians and carts, for each head of the
'family, regardless of where he lived, felt that he must pay
a visit to "Corner Store" or even go to Beaufort. Satur-
day night was the time for general merriment, a dance for
non-church members, a sing or a shout for those who were.

175 Miss Towne complained in 1876 that on Frogmore plan-
527 tation where she lived the people were beginning to have
parties on other nights of the week as well. "Last night,"
she wrote, "our boys went to a party again, and to-day
they are sleeping it out. We have issued the edict, 'No
more parties this winter,' for there is arising among the
Frogmore young men a constant desire for gayety,—sup-
pers, etc., that we intend to begin to frown upon. They
(273) are flush just now, and are spending too much. They are
all temperance parties, which is one good thing."²²

574 Although there were occasions when people from all
527 parts of the Island assembled together, as on Saturday
175 afternoons at Corner Store, at church on Sunday mornings,

²² *Letters and Diary*, p. 257.